

**NEBRASKA DHHS/DIVISION OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
NEBRASKA REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT PROGRAM
FY 2011**

State of Nebraska – Department of Health and Human Services

REQUEST FOR APPLICATION FOR REFUGEE SOCIAL SERVICES

Refugee Social Services	Thursday, May 19, 2011, by 5:00 p.m. CDST
RFA Title	Date Due
Monday, March 28, 2011	Karen Parde
Date of Issuance	Contact Person

REQUEST FOR APPLICATION

Sealed applications, subject to the conditions included in the RFA, will be received until the above listed application due date. On Friday, May 20th, the applications will be publicly opened and reviewed for furnishing the following described services to the State of Nebraska, Department of Health and Human Services, in accordance with the Request for Application and the specifications and conditions attached hereto.

Applicants are **strongly encouraged to ensure that their application contains all required technical information** when submitted. If an application is missing technical information, the applicant will receive a telephone call followed by a written and/or electronic notification. The applicant will have until Tuesday, May 31, 2011, by 5:00 p.m. CDST to submit the needed information. **If the applicant does not submit the requested additional information by 5:00 p.m. CDST on May 31, 2011, the application will not be considered for funding. Though applicants that submit missing technical information by May 31, 2011 will be considered for funding their application will automatically receive a 10 point reduction in the final score of their application.**

All questions must be submitted in writing to karen.parde@nebraska.gov. If your agency wishes to receive a copy of the answers to all questions submitted to DHHS on the RFA, send an email to karen.parde@nebraska so your name is placed on the list of interested agencies. If you do not submit a request, you will NOT receive the written answers to submitted questions.

INSTRUCTIONS TO APPLICANT – READ CAREFULLY

FAILURE TO FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS MAY RESULT IN A REJECTED APPLICATION

- All applications are subject to the Standard Conditions and Terms of Agreement as specified in this document.
- Review application for completeness. **If applicant does not submit requested information by the deadline(s), the application will not be considered for funding.**
- Each narrative section within an application has a specified page limit. Applications with narrative sections **exceeding** the specified page limit **may be considered for funding. However any pages in the narrative sections exceeding the specified page limit for that section will not be considered in the scoring.** For example, the narrative in Section I has a 3 page limit. If the submitted narrative for Section I is 4 pages, the 4th page would not be read and scored. Any information provided on the 4th page would not be considered in the scoring.

- Faxed applications **will not be accepted.**
- The signed certification page **must be included with the proposal.**
- Applications **must be typewritten and manually signed to be valid.**
- The closing date for applications is **May 19, 2011.** *All applications must be received by this date to be considered. Applications will not be accepted if postmarked by the closing date.*
- **The principal contact person for all matters pertaining to the RFA is Karen Parde. Please contact Ms. Parde at karen.parde@nebraska.gov with any questions concerning the RFA or the application.**

SUBMIT APPLICATION TO: Karen Parde, State Refugee Resettlement Coordinator
 Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services
 Refugee Resettlement Program
 301 Centennial Mall South, 4th Floor
 PO Box 95026
 Lincoln NE 68509-5026

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**NEBRASKA DHHS/DIVISION OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
NEBRASKA REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT PROGRAM
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I. PROGRAM SUMMARY

Funds for Social Services activities are authorized under the Refugee Act of 1980 (PL-96-212), as amended and Title 45 of the Code of Federal Regulations, parts 400 and 401. The Act enables the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children & Families, Office of Refugee Resettlement to reimburse State governments for the provision of refugee social services. The designated single State agency for administering such funds is the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, Refugee Resettlement Program.

The Refugee Resettlement Program must use Social Services funds primarily for employability services designed to enable refugees to obtain jobs within one year of becoming enrolled in services in order to achieve economic self-sufficiency as soon as possible. Social services may continue to be provided after a refugee has entered a job to help the refugee retain employment or transition to a better job.

II. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Refugee Social Service Program is to increase economic self-sufficiency and to decrease dependency on public assistance among refugees. Program proposals need to address those problems specific to refugees and will demonstrate special concern for the linguistic and cultural barriers to refugee entry into the United States workforce. ***The primary goal of the program is to provide for employability services designed to enable refugees to obtain jobs within one year of enrollment in services and achieve self-sufficiency as soon as possible.*** Services should be aimed at strengthening and supporting the ability of a refugee individual and family to achieve and maintain economic self-sufficiency. Services may continue to be provided after a refugee has entered a job to help the refugee retain employment or transition to a better job. The program funds cannot be used for long-term training programs such as vocational training that last for more than a year or educational programs that are not intended to lead to employment within a year. This initiative represents a continuing effort to increase the effectiveness of refugee service delivery, to ensure cost effective programming, and to expedite self-sufficiency.

Program design will:

1. Prevent duplication of services through formalized collaboration and cooperation. Plans will clearly identify how they will collaborate with the local resettlement and other agencies that provide services to refugees to provide seamless, coordinated services that are not duplicative and lead to self-sufficiency.
2. Service delivery will be designed to effectively remove barriers to employment and to expedite job search and training, leading to self-sufficiency within one year of enrollment.
3. Program design will ensure employment-related goals and will prioritize services to new arrival and public assistance recipients.
4. Program design will reflect the ethnic diversity of refugees as reflected in the changing demography of the refugee population.
5. Program design will be based on measurable performance standards, which will enable objective reporting, monitoring, and requisites for continued funding during the grant funding period.

6. Services funded must be provided to the maximum extent feasible in a manner that is culturally and linguistically compatible with the language and cultural background of a refugee.
7. Services funded must be provided to the maximum extent feasible in a manner that includes the use of bilingual/bicultural women on service agency staff to ensure adequate service access by refugee women.

III. INTENT

The intent of the Refugee Resettlement Program is to:

- Award funds through a regional and programmatic (i.e. activity specific) allocation process which emphasizes distribution as well as quality projects and programs that meet the goals of the program. Due to the cities of Lincoln and Omaha being the primary resettlement sites in the State, it is anticipated that they will receive the majority of the available funds.
- *Supplement* the budget of refugee service providers. Therefore, organizations are encouraged to seek other sources of funding and collaborate and coordinate programs and services with other organizations in order to optimize the use of Social Services funds.
- Provide funds to support ESL with a primary focus of obtaining and retaining employment within one year of enrolling. It is understood that during their first year in this country, refugees may also need other information provided through ESL classes. Though employment will be the primary focus, other life skills topics may be included in the curriculum for newly arrived refugees.
- Award funds based on scores and services needed in the community to meet the goals of the program with a priority given to applications that show a clear path to self-sufficiency through the services provided and a clear partnership with other agencies in providing those services. Prevention of duplication of services, tracking participation, and ensuring completion of the program within one year of enrolling will be evident in the applications funded.
- Though funding for citizenship and other services will be considered, it is the intention of the State to grant the majority of the funds, if not all, to those services with a goal of expediting self-sufficiency.

IV. IMPORTANT PROGRAM CONCEPTS:

Screening and Enrollment:

All providers are expected to review immigration documentation and screen clients to ensure that they are eligible for services.

Providers providing employment services will be expected to provide a comprehensive program which assesses a client's employability; prepares employment plans; and assists clients to find appropriate jobs through outreach and employer contracts; provides some supports to the clients on the job so that they can remain employed; and continues to work with clients if necessary to achieve self-sufficiency or partner with another agency to provide these services.

ESL providers should collaborate with other providers to ensure comprehensive services are provided. This collaboration should be described in the application and can be reflected in joint agency applications or a letter of support from the collaborating agency.

Enrollment of a client in employment services follows a complete assessment, which includes:

- Obtaining intake information

- Preparing a Family Self-Sufficiency Plan in conjunction with the client and family members. The plan compares the household's current monthly income to expenses and determines a projected income goal to attain self-sufficiency.
- Prepare an Employment Plan for each adult seeking employment which identifies the client's educational background, employment history, strengths, skills, barriers to employment, immediate steps and long term goals to obtain employment.

Job Development:

Those agencies with employment program proposals will be expected to incorporate job development strategies into the services provided. Through outreach and employer research, job development results in the identification and/or creation of job openings suitable for refugee clients. A major factor in achieving program success is recruiting the prospective employers who are willing to invest the time, effort and resources for the integration of the refugees in the workforce.

Program Preparation:

Employment preparation can include pre-employment services such as:

- Job orientation activities that include introduction to U.S. workplace expectations and norms.
- Development of job search and interviewing skills,
- Development of client resumes,
- Assistance with job applications, and
- Training in the use of public transportation.

These services may be provided on an individual or group basis. The provision of employment preparation services must be based on individual client needs as identified and documented during initial assessment for employment services. Employment preparation services must not delay job search and placement and should be provided concurrently with job placement activities.

V. AWARD INFORMATION:

DHHS reserves the right to award funds based on geographic region, as well as on demographic data for the communities to be served. DHHS seeks to ensure that the awardees provide services to the greatest number and diversity of eligible refugees that have been in the country for 60 months or less. Fund distribution will be based upon the projected size of the eligible refugee populations in communities utilizing Refugee Resettlement and secondary migrant numbers as reported.

Expected Number of Awards: 2-5 in each region.

Though available grant amounts are not finalized, it is anticipated that the following approximate amounts will be available for communities:

Omaha -- 415,000

Lincoln -- \$205,000

Lexington, Grand Island, South Sioux City -- \$40,000

Applicants may propose to provide services in other areas not listed above, with justification.

DHHS intends to award funds to qualified applicants with a competitive score resulting from the proposal review process. DHHS, however, reserves the right to distribute the funds and/or to increase an applicant's initial award request, as deemed necessary to meet the goals of this RFA and to cover all areas in need of services.

Initial awards to successful applicants and the corresponding award for the first budget period are the result of this competitive process. During the subgrant term, however, subsequent budget period awards will be based on available funding, continuing need, and satisfactory contractor performance, as evidenced by financial claims and program monitoring.

When making subsequent budget period awards, DHHS reserves the right to do any of the following:

- Reallocate funds from one region to another region
- Suspend a budget period award to an underperforming grantee
- Award a lesser budget period award than was awarded in a previous budget period to an underperforming grantee
- Award a higher budget period award than was awarded in a previous budget period to high performing subgrantee (as determined by DHHS).

VI. SERVICES DESCRIPTION

Requirements:

1. ESL must be provided to the fullest extent outside normal working hours and must be provided in a concurrent, rather than sequential, time period with employment or other employment-related services.
2. ESL must have a primary focus of obtaining and retaining employment within one year of enrolling. It is understood that new arrivals also may have a need for other information provided through ESL classes. Though employment will be the primary focus, other life skills topics may be included in the curriculum for new arrivals.
3. Establish partnerships with local resettlement and other agencies to ensure the provision of seamless, coordinated services to refugees that are not duplicative.
4. Provide refugee specific services, designed specifically to meet refugee needs and are in keeping with the rules and objectives of the refugee program, except that vocational or job skills training, on-the-job training, or ESL need not be refugee-specific.
5. Provide services to the maximum extent feasible in a manner that is culturally and linguistically compatible with a refugee's language and cultural background.
6. Provide services to the maximum extent feasible in a manner that includes the use of bilingual/bicultural women on service agency staffs to ensure adequate service access by refugee women.
7. Develop an individual employment plan and a family self-sufficiency plan for anyone who receives employment related services.
8. Participation in the local Refugee or Multicultural task force.

Eligible activities for Social Services funding are categorized as Employability Services and Other Services. Qualified activities include the following:

EMPLOYABILITY SERVICES

1. Employment services, including development of a family self-sufficiency plan and an individual employability plan, world-of-work and job orientation, job clubs, job workshops, job development, referral to job opportunities, job search, and job placement and follow-up.
2. Employability assessment services, including aptitude and skills testing.
3. On-the-job training, when such training is provided at the employment site and is expected to result in full-time, permanent, unsubsidized employment with the employer who is providing the training.

4. English language instruction (ESL), **with an emphasis on English as it relates to obtaining and retaining a job**
5. Vocational training, including driver education and training, when provided as part of an individual employability plan.
6. Skills recertification, when such training is needed to qualify to practice in a profession in the United States, the training may consist of full-time attendance in a college or professional training program, provided that such training: Is approved as part of the employability plan for the individual by the Refugee Resettlement Program; does not exceed one year duration; is specifically intended to assist the professional in becoming relicensed in a profession; and, if completed, can realistically be expected to result in such relicensing. This training may only be made available to individuals who are employed.
7. Day care for children, when necessary for participation in an employability service or for the acceptance or retention of employment.
8. Translation and interpreter services, when necessary in connection with employment or participation in an employability service.
9. Case management services for refugees who are considered employable and for recipients of Aid to Dependent Children (ADC) and General Assistance (GA) who are considered employable, provided that such services are directed toward the attainment of employment by the refugee as soon as possible after arrival in the United States.
10. Assistance in obtaining Employment Authorization Documents (EADs).

OTHER SERVICES

These are allowable services, but priority will be given to those services related to employment.

1. Information and referral services.
2. Outreach services, including activities designed to familiarize refugees with available services, to explain the purpose of these services, and facilitate access to these services.
3. Social adjustment services, including:
 - a. Emergency services, as follows: assessment and short-term counseling to persons or families in a perceived crisis; referral to appropriate resources; and the making of arrangements for necessary services.
 - b. Health-related services, as follows: information; referral to appropriate services; assistance in scheduling appointments and obtaining services; and counseling to individuals or families to help them understand and identify their physical and mental health needs and maintain or improve their physical and mental health.
 - c. Home management services, as follows: formal or informal instruction to individuals or families in management of household budgets, home maintenance, nutrition, housing standards, tenants' rights, and other consumer education services.
4. Day care for children, when necessary for participation in a service other than an employability service.
5. Transportation, when necessary for participation in a service other than an employability service.
6. Translation and interpreter services, when necessary for a purpose other than in connection with employment or participation in an employability service.
7. Case management services, when necessary for a purpose other than in connection with employment or participation in employability services.

8. Citizenship and naturalization preparation services, including English language training and civics instruction to prepare refugees for citizenship, application assistance for adjustment to legal permanent resident status and citizenship status, assistance to disabled refugees in obtaining disability waivers from English and civics requirements for naturalization, and the provision of interpreter services for the citizenship interview.

VII. TARGET POPULATION PRIORITIES

The Refugee Resettlement Program must plan its Social Services Program and allocate its Social Services funds in such a manner that services are provided to those refugees who have been in the country for 60 months (5 years) or less and are within the following order of priority:

1. All newly arriving refugees during their first year in the U.S., who apply for services;
2. Refugees who are receiving cash assistance;
3. Unemployed refugees who are not receiving cash assistance; and
4. Employed refugees in need of services to retain employment or to attain economic independence.

To be eligible for services, a refugee must have been awarded U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service status as follows:

1. Individual paroled as a refugee; individual granted political asylum or conditional entry status (admission pursuant to Section 203(a)(7) as indicated by INS Form I-94).
2. Individual who entered the country with refugee status designation as indicated on INS Form I-551 or I-94 or holds permanent resident status as a result of adjustment of status under PL 96-212.

AND

3. Have been in the U.S. for less than 60 months (There is an exception to the 60 month time period when providing referral, interpretation, and services for citizenship and naturalization preparation).

VIII. ELIGIBILITY

Eligible Applicants:

Any state or local public agency, private non-profit, or private for-profit program operator may submit a written application in response to this Request for Application.

Applicant Eligibility:

To be eligible to apply for funding, applicants must meet all of the following criteria:

1. Applicant cannot discriminate based on age, religion, sex, race, color, disability, or national origin;
2. Applicant must have a drug-free workplace policy;
3. Applicant must agree to participate in any count of refugee persons undertaken by the Refugee Resettlement Program or any person or firm contracting with the Refugee Resettlement Program. Information provided by applicant will be strictly confidential.
4. Applicant must conduct and submit an annual, certified, external audit of the organization for the year immediately preceding the application to be eligible for Social Services funding.

IX. REVIEW AND EVALUATION PROCESS

Proposals will be reviewed in accordance with the scoring criteria referenced below by review panelists not affiliated with applicant agencies within that region. Proposals will be reviewed competitively. DHHS will select grantees that will best establish comprehensive services for the achievement of self-sufficiency for eligible refugees. DHHS, however, reserves the right to distribute the funds as deemed necessary to meet the goals of this RFA and to cover all areas in need of services.

If additional funding becomes available or if circumstances otherwise allow DHHS to fund additional grantees, DHHS reserves the right to subsequently reconsider eligible proposals submitted in response to the RFA using the same scoring criteria and award methodology. Updated information may be requested as deemed necessary. DHHS also reserves the right to issue a new RFA at any time during the subgrant term to solicit new proposals.

The Refugee Resettlement Program Application Review Team will include representatives from the Department of Health and Human Services and other agencies, organizations, and groups that have involvement with the refugee population. The representatives will score written applications and will submit recommendations to the Refugee Resettlement Program for final approval. Applications that do not receive a score of at least 65 points are at high risk of not being funded. It is at the discretion of the Review Team whether or not to recommend funding projects with a score of 65 points or less.

Written applications will be evaluated on the following factors, assigning a numerical weight, with a maximum total of 100 points.

Criteria:

Section I. Organization, Programs, Services (3 page maximum – 20 points)

History shows organization's development; mission clearly states the focus of the organization's programs and services; adequacy of staffing, experience, and competence of staff; demonstrated ability of project management. The use of bilingual/bicultural women is provided to the maximum extent feasible. If the applicant plans to subgrant, adequate information is provided on the subgrantee. Agency clearly demonstrates the ability to meet the interpretation needs of the refugee population they are serving. The target population matches the priority groups of the program. The agency appears to have the capacity to adjust to new refugee populations if necessary. Clearly identifies how the agency partners with resettlement and other agencies to ensure seamless services and avoids duplication of work.

Section II. Program Funding Request (4 page maximum – 30 points)

The purpose of the program service is clearly defined. There is evidence that ongoing services are essential and expanded services will fill an identified gap. The need of the services is supported by providing information of the number of refugees in the community that fall within the 60 month criteria and meet the priority population goal. (Though it is understood that it is impossible to document exact numbers of refugees in a community due to secondary migration, provide numbers of eligible refugees served in the community and anecdotal information on the numbers in the community.) The agency shows success in providing services to the refugee population. Services are described and are aimed at strengthening and supporting the ability of refugees to remove barriers and achieve and maintain economic self-sufficiency within one year. A comprehensive program which assesses employability; prepares employment and self-sufficiency plans; assists refugees to find jobs; and provides some support after a refugee receives a job is clearly outlined. A plan is in place to develop new job opportunities for refugees. Services are refugee specific (where applicable) and meet the ethnic diversity of refugees as reflected in the changing demography of the refugee population. To the maximum extent possible, services are located in refugee communities and in a manner that is culturally and linguistically

compatible. ESL services are provided to the fullest extent outside normal working hours, in a concurrent time period with employment services and have a primary focus on obtaining and retaining employment.

Section III. Program Data (2 page maximum – 10 points)

Data for type of project, services, population (s) served and characteristics of populations served. There is a record of timely submission of required reports. Respond to questions regarding trends in refugees served.

Section IV. Budget Information (Tables plus 2 page maximum for narrative – 15 points)

Budget and audit reflect use of sound fiscal policy. The application needs to include the outlined budget completed on the forms provided. A budget narrative which clearly identifies the proposed spending and provides details about how budget line items were calculated and how estimated costs were determined is completed. Budget and audit show diversified budget funding sources.

Section V. Effectiveness Measures (2 page maximum plus logic model – 15 points)

A logic Model is completed that clearly demonstrates activities, outputs, outcomes, and impact of the program. Description of how services provided will impact the individuals and families served is provided and how each is evaluated for effectiveness. Successes and challenges of the program are identified and how the agency builds on successes and addresses challenges. **Substantiate with data.** The agency has a plan to identify address gaps in services.

Section VI. Community Involvement and Coordination of Services (2 page maximum – 10 points)

Evidence is provided that shows the applicant is active in a Refugee Task Force and other collaborative and community planning efforts. (In rural communities, evidence that the applicant is actively involved with other task forces/groups that focus on the refugee community) **Letters of support attached (not to exceed six).**

X. AWARDS AND AWARD NOTIFICATION

Award of funds is contingent on continued U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children & Families, Office of Refugee Resettlement funding.

Notification of awards will be made in early August of 2011. Prior to that time, applicants are notified of their pending awards. The Refugee Resettlement Program begins discussions of programmatic and fiscal terms to reach an award agreement. These discussions are limited to terms and conditions not specifically addressed in the RFA and do not significantly alter the application. Grant funding shall be for a one (1) year term, with the option to renew for an additional (1) year. A second year renewal shall be contingent upon funding availability and the satisfactory performance of the subrecipient.

In the event the Refugee Resettlement Program fails to reach agreement with the applicant within thirty (30) days from commencement of negotiations, the Refugee Resettlement Program may disqualify any such applicant and proceed to award the grant funding to the next qualified applicant.

The Refugee Resettlement Program reserves the right to accept or reject any or all applications received as a result of this request, to negotiate with all qualified sources, or to cancel in part or in its entirety this Request for Application. This Request for Application does not commit the Refugee Resettlement Program to award grant funding, to pay costs incurred for the preparation of applications, or to fund services.

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Application Completion Checklist

To ensure your application for Nebraska Refugee Resettlement Social Services funding is complete and will be accepted for review, **please use and include this checklist in your final application packet.**

- ☐ The application **DOES NOT EXCEED THE PAGE MAXIMUMS INDICATED FOR NARRATIVE SECTIONS within the document.**
- ☐ The attached application is presented on the forms provided or in similar format on the applicant's own application document. All questions are addressed.
- ☐ Budget(s) identify all sources and uses of funds as they relate to the program(s) described in the application.

THE FOLLOWING ITEMS MUST BE INCLUDED:

- ☐ Copy of a certified, external financial audit for the year preceding application. **Submit only one copy with original.**
- ☐ Organization's articles of incorporation and/or proof of 501(c)(3) status.
- ☐ List of Board of Directors, including their addresses and phone numbers.
- ☐ List of personnel supported through this grant, their job duties, and the percent of time charged to the grant.
- ☐ Letter(s) of support (not to exceed ten).
- ☐ Application Checklist (final page of RFA) must be submitted as the first page of a submitted application.
- ☐ Agency Level Drug-free work place policy attached.
- ☐ Please submit **original** and **six (6) copies** of the **entire application and supporting documentation**. *The one copy of the certified, external financial audit is submitted with the original.*